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Social and human rights questions: social development

Letter dated 10 December 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Guanajuato Declaration, adopted at the World Youth Conference (see annex I), held in the city of León, in the state of Guanajuato, Mexico from 25 to 27 August 2010. This initiative by the Government of Mexico was supported by various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and brought together 112 official delegations. Over 3,000 young people from 135 countries participated in the diverse activities related to the Conference.

I should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annexes as a document of the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 27 (b), and of the forty-ninth session of the Commission for Social Development under agenda item 3 (b) (ii).

I believe that the outcome of the World Youth Conference is particularly relevant in the context of activities under the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, declared by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/134.

(*Signed*) Yanerit **Morgan**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex I to the letter dated 10 December 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

Guanajuato Declaration

León, Guanajuato, 27 August 2010

The Guanajuato Declaration is the outcome of wide consultations and contributions of the participant Governments during working sessions at the World Youth Conference and of pre-conferences at Strasbourg, France; Salvador de Bahía, Brazil; and Abuja, Nigeria; four meetings of the International Steering Committee and inputs sent by its members; open online worldwide consultations; meetings of the Mexican National Committee for the World Youth Conference and internal consultations within the Mexican Government as well as pre-conferences organized throughout Mexico with the participation of young people, civil society organizations and local government entities; and discussions with Governments through their permanent representations to the United Nations. The Government Forum of the World Youth Conference also received the Non-Governmental Organization Statement for the World Youth Conference 2010.

Preamble

We, the Ministers of Youth and other representatives of the Governments participating in the World Youth Conference, having met in the City of León, Guanajuato, Mexico, from 25 to 27 August 2010,

Recognizing that young people are key actors in the quest for development, key stakeholders of the Millennium Development Goals and essential allies for their achievement and in this regard, recognizing the importance of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on accelerating progress towards the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, to be held from 20 to 22 September 2010,

Recognizing also that all the Millennium Development Goals are interconnected and mutually reinforcing and underlining the need to pursue these goals through a holistic and comprehensive approach,

Recognizing further that States have made significant achievements in the social integration of young people since the declaration in 1985 of the first International Year of Youth, and yet many important challenges remain in poverty, education, health, employment, technology, culture, security and conflict, civic engagement, democracy, gender equality and the environment, that impede integral human development and along with it, prevent the development of nations,

Reaffirming the importance of the World Programme of Action for Youth, and considering the urgent need of effectively implementing it through plans, mechanisms and programmes at all levels,

Reaffirming our commitment to promote and protect all human rights, including for young people, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments,

Recognizing that the current generation of young people is the largest in history and by sheer numbers and importance, they deserve a central place in efforts to achieve internationally agreed development goals; including the Millennium Development Goals, especially as most developing countries have a high proportion of young people in their populations and this youth bulge offers countries a rare chance to make strategic investments to gain a demographic dividend and break the intergenerational cycle of poverty,

Recognizing also that young people contribute significantly to their families, communities and society through their creativity, capacity for innovation, altruism, adaptation to change, energy and optimism, and therefore are relevant actors and strategic partners for development,

Recognizing the need to develop policies and laws that better support the family, contribute to its stability and take into account its plurality of forms,

Recognizing further the cultural, ethnic, religious and socio-economic diversities of young people and the necessity of taking this into consideration in the formulation of actions for the development of young people,

Conscious of the progress made in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women, yet conscious that it is necessary to bear in mind during the implementation of actions for development that severe inequalities still persist between *women* and men and that these are also reflected in the young population,

Committing ourselves to the objectives of the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (12 August 2010-11 August 2011),[1]

For the above, we identify the following priorities for action, which arise from the participation of young people, civil society, representatives of Governments and international development partners,

Public policies and investment

1. To prioritize increased investments in young people in legal and policy frameworks, and in national development plans, strategies, public policies and institutions, and aim to guarantee the comprehensive development of youth, such as through the establishment of universal social protection floors taking into account national circumstances and with the meaningful participation of young people, as well as to develop or strengthen national systems for monitoring and evaluation;

Poverty and hunger

2. Advance economic policies for sustainable growth that reduce income inequality and guarantee to young people equal opportunities for development, including income, food and employment, and strengthen our efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 1 objectives and targets to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger;

[1] General Assembly resolution 64/134.

3. Strengthen policies and programmes for overcoming poverty with a view to better incorporate the development needs of young people;

4. Make sustained investments with a life-cycle approach for developing human capital with special attention to young people, especially young women and girls living in poverty and social inclusion;

5. Develop training programmes for youth which improve methods of production and marketing;

6. Discourage the adoption of any unilateral measure, not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations that hinders the well-being and full enjoyment of all human rights for all, including young people;

Education

7. Promote the enrolment and retention of young people in educational institutions at all levels, including secondary, technical, vocational, and higher education with special attention to women and young people living in poverty and in vulnerable situations;

8. Put in place programmes for early childhood education, literacy and life-skills and vocational training, address school dropout and offer a second opportunity to young people who have not completed basic education and strengthen our efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 2 objectives and targets of universal primary education;

9. Improve the quality and relevance of educational curricula at all levels and orient educational programmes towards the comprehensive development of young people that includes: intercultural, civic and peace education, solidarity, human rights education, education for sustainable development, comprehensive education on human sexuality, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, as well as the formulation of competencies and conditions for employability taking into account necessities of the local context;

10. Invest in quality educational institutions at all levels and continuing teacher training programmes, as well as the professionalization of persons working with youth;

11. Develop non-formal educational programmes and recognize or certify non-formal educational programmes carried out by civil society, especially by young people for young people;

Health

12. Recognize the need to guarantee the full realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable level of physical and mental health for young people and strengthen our efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6 objectives and targets;

13. Involve young people in programmes that encourage a healthy lifestyle, the practice of sports, physical activity, rest, leisure and other healthy habits among them; as well as raise awareness of nutrition, eating disorders and obesity;

14. Establish public policies that guarantee young people's access to health without any discrimination and increase the quality and coverage of health systems

and health-care services, including for sexual and reproductive health, reduce maternal morbidity and mortality, prevention, care, treatment, counselling of young people in order to halt and reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis, malaria and other diseases, including non-communicable diseases;

15. Strengthen or establish youth-friendly substance abuse prevention programmes and affordable treatment and rehabilitation programmes, in order to address the vulnerability of young people to substance abuse;

Employment

16. Make policies to advance decent work for young people a priority of national development frameworks and employment policies, and adopt targeted measures to promote decent employment among disadvantaged young women and men, including policies for first-time employment, apprenticeships, internships, contracts for working students, programmes to promote youth entrepreneurship, skills and employment programmes and measures to facilitate the transition of young workers from informal to formal employment and from temporary to stable jobs;

17. Promote policy reforms to protect the right of young people to just and favourable conditions of work, including fair remuneration and social security, freedom of association; and adopt measures to combat exploitation in accordance with relevant international instruments;

18. Facilitate the transition of young people from school and academic life to decent work and invest in programmes that enhance youth employability through skills development and work experience that respond to the requirements of the labour market;

19. Encourage partnerships among Governments, employers organizations, trade unions, the private sector, institutions of higher education, youth organizations and civil society, to foster employment opportunities in the labour market, taking into account regional and national particularities;

20. Promote programmes to foster youth entrepreneurship;

Gender equality

21. Guarantee gender equality, the empowerment of young women and their full employment of all human rights and strengthen our efforts to achieve Millennium Development Goal 3 on gender equality and the empowerment of women as well as the objectives encompassed within the gender equality-related dimensions of all the other Millennium Development Goals;

22. Mainstream a gender perspective in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all public policies and programmes relating to young people in order to overcome all forms of gender-based discrimination, in particular discrimination against young women;

23. Guarantee the principle of equal remuneration for work of equal value, and equal treatment for all young people in the workplace as well as equal sharing of employment and family responsibilities between women and men;

24. Develop or strengthen laws, policies and programmes with a holistic approach to address, prevent, and eradicate all forms of discrimination and violence against young women and girls, in particular gender-based violence;

25. Promote the greater involvement of men, young men and boys in measures aimed to prevent all forms of discrimination and violence against women and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women, especially young women;

26. Adopt effective measures to combat and prevent the sexual exploitation and trafficking of persons, especially involving minors and young people;

27. Promote the participation of young women in decision-making processes in political, social and economic activities and the elimination of barriers that limit their full contribution to society;

Technology and innovation

28. Ensure universal, non-discriminatory, equitable, safe and affordable access to information and communications technology to everyone, remove the barriers to bridging the digital divide, including through transfer of technology and international cooperation on mutually agreed terms and implement measures to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and infrastructure to use information and communications technology;

29. Encourage the participation of young people in the generation and distribution of knowledge through information and communication technologies, as well as to use information and communication technologies to deepen intercultural dialogue and encourage respect for social, cultural and religious diversity;

30. Guarantee protection against arbitrary interference with privacy;

31. Promote and support research, development and application of technologies created by young people;

Culture

32. Promote cultural development and creativity of young people, respecting their forms and means of expression and different forms of thought;

33. Promote peaceful coexistence, intercultural dialogue, tolerance and mutual respect for cultural and religious diversity;

34. Guarantee respect for young people's rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

35. Promote the role of the Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations in fostering mutual understanding and respect both locally and globally;[2]

Access to justice and security

36. Abide by the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and our obligations under human rights instruments in all Government

[2] In accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/14.

actions in relation to young people and consider young women and men as subjects of all rights;

37. Promote the recognition of young people as key actors for development and eliminate their stigmatization as causes of conflict and violence;

38. Develop policies and programmes to identify and address factors that put young people at risk of engaging in crime and prevent youth violence;

39. Adopt systems of justice specialized for dealing with young people in conflict with the law, putting as the highest priority their social rehabilitation and reintegration, including through their participation in education and training programmes, and using detainment only as a last recourse, while also providing legal remedies for victims;

40. Implement a wider application of alternatives to imprisonment, restorative justice and other relevant measures to promote the transfer of young offenders to services outside the criminal justice system;

41. Enhance comprehensive measures that guarantee the safety of young people, protecting them from factors of insecurity derived from organized crime, physical violence and drug-related crimes;

42. Strengthen and promote the role of young people and youth organizations in building peace in their communities, countries and regions;

43. Address the issue of youth in situations of armed conflict and under occupation in accordance with international humanitarian law;

Participation

44. Encourage the full and effective participation of young people in the assessment of the different needs of youth in spaces of co-decision and public decision-making at all levels and in all areas that affect their lives, inter alia, by supporting the establishment of independent national youth councils;

45. Ensure that young people have the education, information and skills they need for their effective participation;

46. Provide opportunities and further strengthen the active participation of young people, with full respect for their autonomy and their organizations in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of public programmes and policies at all levels and in all areas that affect their lives, including by promoting and reinforcing youth voluntarism and providing adequate resources;

47. Encourage the interaction of young people globally, by giving support to the establishment of appropriate platforms and networks for exchange and cooperation;

Sustainable development

48. Strengthen the participation of young people as important actors in the protection of sustainable development and the protection, preservation and improvement of the environment at the local, national and international levels;

49. Involve young people in programmes oriented towards the sustainable development and sustainable management of natural resources and promote sustainable consumption and use of natural resources;

50. Support the contribution of youth organizations in policies relating to the preservation of natural resources, renewable and sustainable energy, environmental sustainability and climate change through access to adequate education and training;

51. Encourage sustainable development education programmes in schools and communities and promote opportunities for young people to engage in environmentally sustainable jobs;

52. Support the creation of youth networks for cooperation on the issue of the environment at the national and international levels;

International migration

53. Recognize that young migrants represent an asset to sustain economic development in countries of destination and origin;

54. Adopt comprehensive migration policies that promote and protect the human rights of migrants, including young migrants in order to maximize the positive effects of migration and respond to the challenges which migration poses to countries of origin, transit and destination;

55. Encourage agreements between countries of origin, transit and destination for young people and young workers to migrate safely, preventing them from being subject to exploitation, smuggling, trafficking and violence;

56. Promote social integration in countries of destination to enable young migrants to share the benefits and contribute to the economic, social and cultural development of their communities;

International cooperation

57. Accelerate progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals by assigning greater importance to youth issues in order to make more visible the situation of young people;

58. Promote the implementation and, as appropriate, reinforce international or regional agreements and plans on youth;

59. Promote the development of evidence-based national, regional and international policies, plans and strategies for youth and the collection, analysis and dissemination of data disaggregated by gender and age, as well as research on youth issues;

60. Encourage the implementation of national youth policies as well as regional programmes on youth and support national systems for monitoring and evaluation, including by providing appropriate financial resources and international assistance;

61. Promote the establishment of thematic groups, platforms, associations or networks for exchange and disseminate evidence and lessons learned in the implementation of youth policies;

Based on the priorities identified, the participating Governments decide to:

1. Take necessary measures and work in partnership with civil society, international organizations and international cooperation agencies to implement the priorities identified in this Declaration with the full and effective participation of youth;

2. Continue the ongoing discussions within the framework of the United Nations General Assembly regarding the effective implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, as well as strengthening mechanisms of coordination within the United Nations system to support global, regional and national policies and programmes for youth;

3. Urge donors and other countries in a position to do so as well as other development partners to strengthen international cooperation for the development of young people, including by providing financial assistance;

4. Welcome the initiative of the General Assembly to proclaim the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding (12 August 2010-11 August 2011), and call on Governments, civil society, the private sector and international cooperation agencies to participate actively in all activities related to the Year and in the United Nations Conference on Youth;

5. Consider discussing an international legal framework that recognizes the specific rights of young people;

6. Request the United Nations General Assembly to recognize, strengthen and mandate the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development to assess and follow up existing declarations, commitments, structures and mechanisms specific to young people, namely the Declaration of the World Youth Conference, the World Programme of Action for Youth and the Millennium Development Goals, in relation to young people;

7. Request the General Assembly of the United Nations to consider at its sixty-fifth session this Declaration as a meaningful contribution to the activities of the International Year of Youth and to the process of reviewing the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals 10 years after their adoption.

Annex II to the letter dated 10 December 2010 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Spanish]

Reservations of the delegation of Ecuador to the Guanajuato Declaration

1. To the section entitled "Public polices and investment", given that the contributions of the working group and the strategies required to execute public policies were not included;

2. To the methodology employed in drafting and approving the Declaration, which was problematic and did not allow for participation by or deliberation and consensus among the attending countries;

3. Education was not included as a fundamental right and the proposal by Ecuador to describe education as "secular, free and high-quality" was also not included;

4. In the section on poverty and exclusion, the Ecuadorian delegation proposed improving the vision of "developing human capital" through "comprehensive human development". This is a critical distinction since it describes how public investments must contribute to the individual as a whole and not simply build productive capacity.